

CHAPTER 2

SOUND-POWERED TELEPHONE TALKER PROCEDURES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, you should be able to do the following:

- *Describe the proper telephone-talker procedures.*

TELEPHONE TALKERS

As you undoubtedly realize by now, you will stand some form of watch aboard ship as a telephone talker. A ship at sea requires many phone talkers, even during a peacetime cruising watch. In addition to those serving as lookouts, talkers perform duty in spaces such as the bridge, the combat information center, and engine rooms. To be a good sound-powered phone talker, you must learn proper circuit discipline and telephone-talker procedures.

CIRCUIT DISCIPLINE

On the sound-powered telephone system, everyone can talk and listen at once. For that reason, talkers must maintain strict circuit discipline. Otherwise, the circuit could become clogged with private conversation just when someone is trying to transmit an important message.

The rules for circuit discipline are as follows:

- Transmit only official messages.
- Depress the transmitter button only when you are actually transmitting.
- Use only standard words and phrases.

- Do not use slang or profanity on the phone.
- Use correct nautical terms.
- Never interrupt another station unless you need to pass an emergency message.

If you must interrupt a station on the circuit, use the phrase, “Silence on the line.” You as a phone talker are an important link in the interior communications chain; that chain is no stronger than its weakest link. Unauthorized talking means the chain has at least two weak links. Be professional — if someone else on your circuit persists in useless talking, remind the person that the line must be kept clear for official messages. Circuit discipline also means you must never show impatience, anger, or excitement. You must talk slowly, clearly, and precisely. Circuit discipline means self-discipline.

- Q1. Why must strict circuit discipline be maintained on the circuit?*
- Q2. When should you depress the transmitter button?*
- Q3. When can you interrupt another station’s transmission?*
- Q4. What phrase should you use if you have to interrupt another station?*
- Q5. What should you do if another person on the circuit persists in useless talking?*

STANDARD TELEPHONE-TALKER PROCEDURES

The standard procedure for relaying a message is divided into three parts:

1. Give the name of the station called.
2. Give the name of the station calling.

3. State the message.

In other words, you call the station for whom you have a message, identify yourself, and send the message without waiting for the receiving station to answer.

When you receive a message, acknowledge (receipt for) it as soon as you understand the message. Repeat it to the sender word for word. For example, you might receive the message “Main Control – Bridge. Shift control of number one bravo gas turbine to the bridge.” Your response should be “Shift control of number one bravo gas turbine to the bridge. Main Control, aye.” Do not use “aye” to answer “yes” to a question; instead, use “affirmative” or some other appropriate reply. Likewise, use “negative” to answer “no.”

When communicating on the sound-powered phone system, use statements instead of direct questions. For example, say “Report the status of number one bravo gas turbine” instead of asking “What is the status of number one bravo gas turbine?” Say “Report the estimated repair time of number one bravo gas turbine” instead of asking “When will number one bravo gas turbine be repaired?”

Do not use slang expressions or locally devised codes. Also do not use abbreviations that may be easily misunderstood, such as GTE and SSDG.

- Q6. *The standard procedure for relaying a message is divided into what three parts?*
- Q7. *How do you acknowledge receipt of a message?*
- Q8. *Why should you avoid using abbreviations?*

Circuit Testing

To find out if telephone stations are manned and ready, the control station conducts a circuit test. The circuit test consists of a phone check of all stations. When making the phone check, the control station says, "All Stations – Control. Phone check."

Each talker then acknowledges in assigned order. On a damage control circuit, responses to the phone check would go like this:

Talker in repair two: "Repair Too, aye."

Talker in repair three: "Repair Tree, aye."

Talker in repair five: "Repair Fife, aye."

Each station responds in order, but waits only a few seconds for the station immediately preceding to acknowledge. For example, if you are the talker in repair three and the talker in repair two does not respond in a few seconds, you acknowledge. Repair two then responds at the end of the check. A circuit test is not complete until every station has answered and all equipment faults have been corrected.

Q9. How does the control station find out if all stations on a circuit are manned and ready?

Q10. What do you do when the station before you does not answer a circuit test?

Q11. When is a circuit test considered complete?

Sending a Message

When you send a message, first call the name of the station you want to communicate with; then identify your own station; and finally, state the message:

"Foc'sle – Bridge. Range to anchorage too thousand yards."

Receiving a Message

When you receive a message, first repeat the message to the sender; then identify yourself; and last, acknowledge the message:

“Range to anchorage too thousand yards. Foc’sle, aye,”

Repeating a Message

When you receive a message that is not clear to you, ask the sender to repeat the message by using the words, “Say again.” For example, the bridge wants the foc’sle to make the anchor ready for letting go. The bridge talker says, “Foc’sle – Bridge. Make the anchor ready for letting go.”

The foc’slc talker, who does not understand the message, should then say, “Bridge- Foc’sle. Say again.”

The bridge then repeats the message.

The foc’sle acknowledges by saying, “Make the anchor ready for letting go. Foc’sle, aye.”

Q12. What do you do if a message is not clear to you?

Spelling

Spell difficult words, using the phonetic alphabet preceded by the prowords (procedural words) “I spell.” Pronounce the word before and after spelling it, for example:

“Enterprise. I spell: ECHO NOVEMBER TANGO ECHO ROMEO PAPA ROMEO INDIA SIERRA ECHO. Enterprise.”

Q13. What prowords are used before you phonetically spell a word?

Temporarily Leaving the Circuit

When you are relieved by another phone talker, you must request permission to change phone talkers:

“Bridge – After Steering. Request permission to change phone talkers.”

If you need to exchange a set of faulty phones for a good set, you must request permission to change phones:

“Bridge – Combat. Request permission to change phones.”

Once you have been given permission to go off the circuit and your relief rejoins the circuit, the new phone talker reports,

“Bridge – Combat. Back on the line.”

Q14. What must you do before leaving the circuit for any reason?

Q15. What is the correct phrase you should use to rejoin the circuit?

Securing From the Circuit

Before securing from the circuit, you must always get permission. For example, the fantail asks, “Bridge – Fantail. Request permission to secure.”

The bridge says, “Request permission to secure. Bridge, aye. Wait.”

The bridge talker gets permission from the OOD for the phone talker on the fantail to secure and then says, “Fantail – Bridge. Secure.”

The fantail talker replies, “Fantail, aye. Going off the line.”

SUMMARY

The Navy has developed and refined circuit discipline and telephone-talker procedures over a period of many years. The objective of the telephone talker is always to pass important information from one station to another with minimum confusion without being misinterpreted. Master the Procedures covered in this chapter to become a reliable communicator on which your command can count.

ANSWERS TO EMBEDDED QUESTIONS

- A1. *To prevent the circuit from becoming clogged with private conversation when someone is trying to transmit an important message.*
- A2. *Only when you are transmitting.*
- A3. *If you have an emergency message that cannot wait.*
- A4. *"Silence on the line."*
- A5. *Remind the person to keep the line clear for official messages.*
- A6. *(1) Name of the station called, (2) name of the station calling, (3) the message.*
- A7. *Repeat the message word for word, identify your station, and say "aye."*
- A8. *Abbreviations can easily be misunderstood.*
- A9. *By conducting a phone check of all stations.*
- A10. *Acknowledge the phone check and let the other station come in at the end.*
- A11. *When every station has answered and all faults in equipment have been corrected.*
- A12. *State the phrase, "Say again."*
- A13. *"I spell."*
- A14. *Get permission.*
- A15. *"Back on the line."*